

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Volkswagen Diesel Cars, 2009-2015

On September 18, 2015, ARB, along with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, notified Volkswagen (VW) that it was taking further steps to investigate violations of California and federal clean air laws because VW had hidden software in its diesel cars that allowed those cars to pass emissions tests in the laboratory while producing much higher levels of pollution when they drove outside the laboratory during normal driving. VW must develop a recall plan to fix this issue for these cars, and is subject to enforcement action.

The following Frequently Asked Questions document is designed to address questions of those with VW diesel cars and others with general interest in this issue.

What vehicles are affected?

Affected diesel models include:

- Jetta (MY 2009 – 2015)
- Jetta Sportwagen (MY 2009-2014)
- Beetle (MY 2013 – 2015)
- Audi A3 (MY 2010 – 2013, 2015)
- Golf (MY 2010 – 2015)
- Passat (MY 2012-2015)

Can I still drive my Volkswagen diesel car?

Yes. These cars are still legal for consumers to drive.

Will my car be recalled?

Yes, ARB is working with US EPA and VW to develop a national recall plan that would cover all affected vehicles in the United States. Under ARB's regulation, VW has until November 20, 2015 to provide ARB with a plan to correct the issue. In its plan, VW must fully document how and when it will initiate and complete the recall to ensure the problem is corrected. VW must also document any adverse impacts on the vehicles and consumers associated with the plan. ARB will then evaluate the plan to ensure it will adequately address issues that VW or ARB identifies. Once ARB approves the plan, VW will send out a letter to impacted owners with information on the recall or fix and where to get more information on it.

Why don't you just tell VW to bring the cars in right now?

ARB is working to fully understand the nature and scope of issues with the affected vehicles. To this end, we are still conducting our investigation on the nature, depth, and breadth of VW's deception.

ARB then needs to be sure that VW develops an effective fix for each of the three engine types in their cars, since each engine type (Gen 1, 2 and 3) uses different technologies to control pollution.

Finally, it is crucial that whatever action VW takes to fix these cars also protects the consumer and the environment. That means the fix will need to consider safety, drivability, fuel economy and the durability of the engine itself and the emission control technologies.

What is involved in a recall?

VW needs to identify who currently owns these cars, and develop a comprehensive plan to reach each and every one of these consumers. The consumer letter VW develops will be reviewed by ARB before it is sent to ensure it is consistent with ARB requirements.

Do I need to go to a Smog Check station?

No, not because of this investigation. However, if your diesel vehicle is scheduled for a Smog Check, you should go through with your regular biennial test and DMV registration.

What about all the additional pollution these cars have been putting into the air?

ARB is developing an accurate inventory of the amount of excess emissions – that is, pollution – that spewed into California's air as a result of VW's actions.

Developing this inventory requires a complex analysis, based on how many miles these cars drove and the 'emissions profile' of each engine group (Gen 1, 2 and 3) – that is, how much additional pollution was produced under what conditions.

VW will be held accountable for the extra emissions that its vehicles released to the air.

What about other diesel cars by other manufacturers?

On September 25, 2015 ARB sent a letter to all vehicle manufacturers that sell cars in California notifying them that ARB is going to be using enhanced screening tests on every diesel car and light truck from model year 2009 on, to further support ARB's regular efforts to ensure compliance with air quality laws.

This enhanced testing will include new test cycles in the laboratory, developed by ARB specifically for diesel engines, testing of emissions while vehicles are driving outside the laboratory, and accessing information from the vehicles' diagnostics systems while they are being driven.

Are clean diesels real?

Yes. Diesel cars can be very clean if they have emission equipment that is well maintained and is operating properly. The tailpipe exhaust of diesel vehicles can be filtered and scrubbed very effectively with modern emission controls and there are multiple examples on the road today of clean diesel light-duty and heavy-duty vehicles.